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A BRIEF ACCOUNT

OF THE FIRST CONCORDIUM,
OR
HARMONIOUS INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE,

A Home for the Affectionate, Skilful, and Industrious, uncontaminated by false sympathy, avaricious cunning, or excessive labour.

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CONCORDIUM, BOOKSELLERS.

IN the present state of general distress, the attention of very many is devoted to considering the most feasible means of re-modelling society on a basis in which all shall be secured from the want and destitution in which thousands are now perishing. From a deep sense of the importance of the subject, we are induced to offer a brief outline of an institution formed with this view, and in which the benefits of association are experienced, though neither the funds nor the extent of the establishment permit of their being developed in their fullest character. The plan originated with a few, and "the Concordium" * established at Ham, in Surrey, is the result.

There it is acknowledged that with Love, Wisdom, Power, the triune universe law, all principles must accord; that on the immutable basis whence this law emanates man is sustained, and that submission to it in all motives, and obedience to it in all acts are primarily important.

Taking, then, their rules from this highest law, the inmates proceed to the practical working in accordance with it, and in so doing, find it needful to adopt the most simple and industrious habits of life, as being the best conditions for the evolution of good in the moral, intellectual, and physical spheres; hence they usually rise early, say from four to six o'clock. Bathing and other personal operations occupy till a quarter-past six, when the bell rings for work of all kinds to commence; and each work in their respective department till a quarter before eight, when they prepare for breakfast. This commences at eight o'clock, and consists generally of Scotch oatmeal porridge, rice, brown wheaten bread, apples, lettuce, and other fresh food, such as the garden produces at the time. In winter, figs, dates, or raisins are provided, instead of the variety the summer affords. During breakfast, one of the members reads aloud a portion of some interesting work selected by themselves or by the Pater. A great variety of subjects are thus brought before their consideration and considerable information is obtained. This practice is also observed during both dinner and supper time.

* "Concordium" designates the dwelling, and "Concordist" the name, of those who desire in all respects to be in concord with the triune universe Spirit and all its creations.

At a quarter before nine o'clock each one resumes his or her particular employment. The occupations consist chiefly in printing, shoe-making, clothes-making and mending, gardening, baking, washing, carpentering, and smith's work. These works are generally carried on in small groups of two or three together. By mutual converse during their labours, the time is happily spent, and the tediousness of long monotonous toil obviated. The return of dinner time soon comes round. At a quarter before one, the bell rings to prepare for it ; at one o'clock all meet in the dining-room, and partake of a simple repast. This generally consists of rice, or other puddings, potatoes, cabbage, beet, parsnips, peas, beans, vegetable-marrow, artichokes, apples, pears, &c., according to the season. At two o'clock all return to their occupations. Having been refreshed both mentally and physically, they resume their work with ease and pleasure. At half-past four, eight hours' labour has been performed, and then the bell rings to relinquish the physical exertions of the day ; and each member joyfully commences another mode of action. They now go more immediately into the mental sphere ; and each one exercises that branch of instruction to which his taste directs him ;—some meet in class, and some go to individual writing, reading, or music. At six o'clock all partake of the third meal, of bread, fruits, and vegetables, with clear spring water, the sole beverage of the Society. In the summer, supper is generally followed by a walk or recreation in the garden. At other seasons, most evenings are engaged in some way previously arranged,—as on Monday, dancing and music ; Tuesday, classes ; Wednesday, family meeting, for the arranging of all the business of the Society, reading of correspondence, receiving members, appointing officers or leaders of departments, and all other duties of the members, and general business of the Society ; Friday, conversation, &c. On Sunday the members are free to choose their own mode of occupying it.

The time for retiring to rest is from nine to ten o'clock. All sleep upon mattrasses, not a feather bed being in the house, as it is considered that lying on feathers is both enervating and unhealthy. The proof of this may be seen by the unwillingness to rise and the lassitude which is felt by persons who are sunk all night in a bed of feathers or down. The animal moisture which is retained in feathers, even though ever so well dried, becomes offensive and unhealthy by being often slept upon. The odour issuing from a newly-opened bed that has been long used, proves how bad a condition it must be to the healthy development of the human frame. They rise early, that their labours may be performed by the natural light of the sun, rather than the artificial light of the candle. This is better for the eyes and for general health. The bright quiet of the morning, interrupted only by the sweet songsters of nature, is most conducive to thought and good feeling.

The general aspect of their practice may appear to be restrictive and ascetic ; but to those accustomed to simple regimen, it is most agreeable, healthy, and pleasant. The initiated of any long standing would not exchange it for any of the old habits of society.

The general reason for their abstinence from the accustomed dietary, and other modes and usages of the world, is, that the universe law may not be transgressed by unnecessary cruelty; that the development of the moral and intellectual faculties in connexion with the Universe Spirit, may be uninterrupted; that life may not be attracted solely to the physical organs and the enjoyment of the senses. Sensuous gratifications are obstructive to the expansion both of the intellectual faculties, the divine sympathies, and the establishment of Being affinities with the divine nature.

It is a law in nature, that the more any organ or faculty is used, the more it is expanded and developed. This is peculiarly the case with respect to the physical appetites, desires, and wants. The insatiable cravings of the appetitive organs can never be fully satisfied. Supply them as abundantly as you will, they continue their endless cry of "Give! give! give!" The more their demands are yielded to, the more clamorous they become in their desires for more and yet more supplies, until the human being at length becomes a vast accumulation of wantful essences or instincts, which cannot be satiated. Death itself can only terminate this continued hunger;—indeed, it is not certain that this change affords any relief to the soul; for in its further existence, as it leaves this stage of life, so it enters the other, with a still more distressing state of want, without the temporary amusement of the material world, with its innumerable baubles, which tend to divert the restless soul from its otherwise unbearable torments. These reliefs being removed, the soul preys upon its own vitals, and experiences within, the hell which has been perverted into the idea of fire and brimstone.

In order that the Life Spirit may not be too strongly attracted to the physical organism, it is needful to submit the intelligent faculties to Wisdom, and the divine sympathies to Love; and to conditionate our three-fold nature to be developed and associated with the Universe Spirit, as universal beings, born for a universal end—a divine destiny.

Hence the students in the Concordium consider it needful to awaken the clearest perceptions of truth in all its various scientific and philosophic departments. Therefore would they devote more time, labour, and expense to the supply of conditions in which thought is developed, than to those which call forth the sense and feeling of the lower and selfish character. Instead of cultivating the breed of animals for amusement and use, and, by feeding upon them, exciting a barbarous desire for torture, slaughter, and death—instead of these every-day acts of barbarity, they fain would prepare for the intellectual faculties such conditions as will draw forth the reasoning powers, the clear perceptions of all varied truths;—prepare lessons, lectures, readings, and writings of the purest and highest order, for the due supply of the newly-awakened faculties. And not only this in all its harmony and beauty is required, but far greater still is the need of highly conditioning the divine nature in the will, the dispositions, the inclinations, the motives, the intentions, the purposes;—in short, to prepare the soul for its highest destiny, that we may have noble designs, holy objects, derived from the extensive and intensive deve-

lopments of the nobler portion of our Being in direct and harmonious association with Love.

In order to effect this, they desire to cultivate the most kind and affectionate feelings, not of selfishness—not of an individual, personal, and lustful character; but Love universal—the Love of Love—the Love of Truth—the Love of beauty, of greatness, of excellence, in all beings, human, animate, and inanimate—a glowing affection for every good, true, and beautiful object, shining forth on all, without respect of person, nature, time, or place: but, like the sun in its constancy and strength, giving forth its warming and invigorating rays to all surrounding worlds.

For the true developing and cultivating of humanity, it appears needful to associate—to form communities—to make some little preparations of an external kind—to obtain concord, order, and efficiency. At least, in our present state of confusion and incipiency, it is needful to re-organize the social state to some extent, before we can even commence any very efficient measures for a permanent good to man. Practical association, upon a new ground, is now loudly demanded by the extreme exigencies of the people, by the increasing intelligence and appreciation of the good so much needed to reconcile the contending party interests, which rend the hearts and distract the heads of those concerned in them.

In the Concordium, a small band are united, to commence a work which we may hope will be followed by multitudes of our fellow men, who, by affection, intelligence, and industry, will be enabled to show to the world the great advantages arising from a simple and honest combination of resources, however small, for effecting a speedy and vast relief from selfish oppressions—from sectarian superstitions, legal frauds, medical quackery, brewers' drugs, distillers' poisons, butchers' flesh and blood, masters' over-strained labour, with a long catalogue of ills, which are acknowledged and complained of by a suffering and distressed people. In self-love, self-indulgence, long-established habits—in prejudice, love of excitements, the great bulk of mankind are so fast bound, that moral precepts, scientific representations, religious or philosophic appeals, are perpetually given without avail. Little, indeed, has been done for ages, in comparison with the immense amount of exertion of this kind which has been put forth;—nothing effectual has yet been carried out; and man is now at a crisis in his career which demands demonstration of a practical, new, and determined character, to give weight and effect to written and oral descriptions of what is really needed to assist him in his approach to goodness, to wisdom, and to happiness.

The Concordium is open to all—investigation is invited; friends are asked to come and reside there, to watch the habits, to witness, aid and correct the defects in the diet, and all other arrangements;—all is open to inspection, as the inmates are conscious of great imperfection, and desirous of improvement. Being devoted in *intention* to Goodness and Truth, the aid of all is sought to instruct in all things relating to an upward and inward progress. The number of inmates for a time must be small, on account of the novelty, and apparently severe ordeal, to which those are subject who join, both

in food and mental discipline. These, however, are tests to which the universal reformer will not long hesitate to submit himself. If his love for goodness and his fellow creatures be strong, he will not reluctantly sacrifice his own personal conveniences for the sake of lessening the evils of an ignorant, a starving, a perishing world; while he will daily more deeply feel the joy that is opened in the affections, the intelligence in the understanding, and the energy in the action, of those whose nature is wholly submissive to the Spirit in its three-fold aspect.

As it may be expected some reason should be assigned why abstinence from animal flesh forms so prominent a feature in the Concordium, it may be well to enter into some detail of the feelings and views of the Concordists respecting it.

Much may be said against animal food on the ground of benevolence, and the instinctive reluctance that attends the shedding of blood; that the innate instinctive Love-law loudly pleads against it, even while conventional arrangements uphold it; that man is injured, while suppressing this law, by the benumbing and blunting of those sympathies in which he is associated with the higher intelligencies; that losing this association, he becomes regardless of the exterior as well as interior world, and, as an isolated individual, consigns to suffering and to death that portion of creation with which he has voluntarily broken the Love relationship.

Much, we say, might be said on this branch of the subject; but the Concordist views the question with reference to man's position as the representative and guardian of Love's peace and order on earth, as appointed to cultivate and adorn it—to preserve it pure and holy—an altar of praise and thanksgiving, whence rises perpetually the voice of joy and health.

Now, alas! it may be truly said, man has unsanctified it; that it is full of cruelty, and defiled with many abominations. The fresh sweetness of the morning air is polluted when man commences his daily ignoble labours;—the bright sun is dimmed on its rising when first the vapours ascend from the dwellings of man—the atmosphere, thickened and darkened by the noxious mists exhaling from unnaturally decomposed matter, obscure its beams. Obedience to universal laws would not permit this. The time is surely come for men and their proceedings to be no longer the first objects of attention; but that universal laws, originating particular rules in harmony with itself, as their supreme generating source, should be so. Particular considerations should now give way to the universe law. In the brutality of language and conduct shown by man to the animal world, is to be traced the sad result of holding it but as subservient to appetite, its caprices and extravagances. In this state, divine order is lost sight of; in this confusion, man sinks deeper and deeper into the mire and clay of debasing and degrading sensuality—it must be so: for the inferior organism is exercised, while the higher is perishing in inactivity. But it will be said, perhaps, we shall be over-run with animals unless destroyed for food. Before this is answered, we ask our readers to contemplate the whole earth in its advanced state as a well-cultivated garden. Man, the superintendent, submitting his

whole being to divine laws, preserves unbroken the harmonic relationship between the things seen and the unseen—between the vital realities and exterior forms; supplying the latter with the elements required by the former for pure manifestations. Then let us change the picture: behold a world given up to wild warfare and confusion—the disjunctive agency strong in its operations—the dark weed overgrowing the soil—man destroying his fellow man, and seeking for the force so to do in food of cruelty and blood. Contrast these worlds, and say which shall this planet become. The Concordist would aid to realize the former view: he feels the work must be constitutional. In each must be constitutionally established and organized the new world, in which shall be the will not to slay or destroy: each individual must be in harmonic relationship with Love, the law-giver. Then only can the corresponding outward world be harmoniously upheld. Therefore, with the Concordist it is not health or pleasure that decides the food question, but submission to the Love-law, and its inwardly wrought sensibilities—submission to the inward voice, which, since the world began, has pleaded for purity, and declared that self, with its appetites, must be denied, if the inner man, the Spirit Love, is to rule in holiness, chastity, and glory.

The Concordists also look to the exceeding great consumption of superfluous articles, whilst the mass of mankind are destitute, as considerably encouraged by the present mode of appetitive indulgence; and therefore, in good-will to all, they desire to preach and practise that simplicity which would permit of the necessary supply being extended to all.

If it can be proved that the Love-law prohibits cruelty, oppression, and slaying of animals as well as men, of course eating them is included. What the law forbids to be prepared, cannot be commanded to be used. Grant, therefore, that no animal is to be killed; that the law which says, "Thou shalt not kill," is not to be limited to human beings; then is the subject of eating flesh at the same time finally settled. The *Health-law* in man can never require that food to be used for its purposes which the *Love-law* in man forbids to be procured. If the Love-law says, "Thou shalt not kill," the Health-law cannot say, "Thou shalt eat the flesh of animals," which cannot be done without killing. The Love-law can only be held sacred by a total abstinence from killing. If this argument is conclusive, then no flesh can be eaten with impunity. The same divine law by which man claims a right to live, equally extends to every sentient being. No supposed or assumed authority of man over animals gives him a right to slay them, but, on the contrary, he is placed over them as a guardian and protector. If, in the exercise of this privilege, he arrogates the right to slay and devour, then he must and does severely suffer for his violations of moral feeling and authority, and pays a heavy penalty in diseases and pains of body and mind, and finally in death.

The maladies occasioned by flesh-eating are indeed numerous. It taints his very blood, stops up his arteries, enlarges his veins, disorders his digestive organs, and greatly diseases his lungs, nerves, and indeed his whole system, by over-stimulation, excitements, irritations, inflammations, and derangements of various kinds in mind and

body, till man is at length utterly destroyed, and the full ends of the Supreme Good frustrated in its full and harmonious exhibition, his highest destiny not having been attained. Although *ultimately* nothing can prevent the universal purpose being finally and entirely accomplished, yet, as far as man is concerned, he has done what he could to derange and delay the most perfect exhibition of divine benevolence. Whatever may be the speculations of reason and the perversions of sense, it is man's undeviating duty to conform as much as possible to the highest good he feels, the clearest truth he sees, and the noblest practice he *can* perform. The good, true, and powerful law works in the three-fold centre of his existence, and his highest duty is constantly to submit his whole undivided existence to its sacred authority. The best loveful feelings revolt at the infliction of pain and death upon every sentient being; and thus Love strongly and plainly condemns the act of cruelty and slaughter. The sight of the purest intelligence turns from beholding mangled limbs and flowing blood, and declares it to be contrary to reason in its purest state to shed blood or to dislodge life. The strong sinewy arm is deprived of its power to kill by the tender sympathies of Love and the intelligent perceptions of reason. Indeed, pure humanity is altogether incompatible with such practices: it cannot be endured. Man loses his purity, his real manhood, when he descends to the degraded work of oppression and death, whether inflicted upon a fly, an animal, or a man. Life we cannot give, nor absolutely preserve: therefore ought we not to interfere with its full and free circulation throughout the universe. Man infringes the prerogative of divinity when he interposes between life and its sentient forms. Here the ingenious speculator may reply, "Then must we stay our hand from attacks even upon vegetable life, and never cut a cabbage or dig a potatoe:" and to this we do not object. It is probable, that in his more elevated state, man will never do either; the food conditions of his purer life will be found in those fruits of trees, shrubs, and plants which give off their produce periodically, without interfering in any manner with life. Thus man, in his simple and god-like state, will be spontaneously supplied with his daily bread, or food, from the free gifts of Heaven, by the fruit-bearing creation, and nothing will be found to hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain.

Thus is slaughter, skinning, cutting, selling, cooking, and all the disgusting process of the drover, the butcher, and the cook at once dispensed with—harmony established with the animal world—man associated with Goodness—crime, misery, and pain almost abolished in our land—life and immortality brought to light and enjoyed; and this not by any act of man, but by the pure act of Love, through man's abstinence from that which Love prohibits. Man's self-activity has produced the mischief arising from cruelty and slaughter; and his passivity, or ceasing selfishly to act, is the only condition required for the Spirit to effect his entire deliverance from his present thraldom and degradation.

It is upon the ground of obedience to Love and Wisdom the Concordists found their rule of total abstinence from all flesh-eating. Very much might be written upon the exciting nature of flesh food, as unna-



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turally stimulating the lower animal propensities, leading to the endless ills which at present exist in families, societies, and countries, by all the falsities of fraud, revenge, war, and endless cruelties, so afflictively prevalent in the human family. But upon this we do not enter, because the question rests upon higher grounds than any physiological considerations, though these are altogether opposed to flesh-eating. Enough has been said to call the attention of the thoughtful to the subject; and should further information be desired, much may be obtained in the works sent to the public through the Concordium Press.

The under-mentioned Works may be had of J. CLEAVE, Shoe Lane; J. WATSON, Paul's Alley, St. Paul's; MERRIMAN & Co., 51, Barbican; and all Booksellers:—

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